

**PROGRESS SINCE 9/11: THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE U.S. ANTI-TERRORIST FINANCING
EFFORTS**

2003

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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Avlarigov, whose brother, Chamsoudin Avlarigov, is affiliated with the Chechen mujahideen.”¹⁵⁰

QATAR CHARITABLE SOCIETY (QCS)

Another purported humanitarian organization engaged in the active financing of Al-Qaida and other designated international terror groups is the Qatar Charitable Society (QCS), the oldest and largest such group in Qatar.¹⁵¹ QCS is a part of the Islamic Coordination Council (ICC), a coordinating body of Muslim charitable groups established in 1985 in Peshawar, Pakistan to maximize the financial assistance reaching Afghanistan.¹⁵² Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, an initial founder of Al-Qaida, was a member of the ICC leadership prior to his assassination in Peshawar in 1989.¹⁵³ Other ICC members include the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), the Saudi Red Crescent Society, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth.¹⁵⁴

Much like the various Saudi charities that have funded Al-Qaida over the past decade, QCS also draws much of its funding primarily from official sources. The organization also has strong and longstanding fundamentalist contacts within the Qatari government itself. In October 2002, the Emir of Qatar, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and the Qatari Foreign Minister, Shaykh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jaber Al Thani, invited the President of QCS, Shaykh Abdul Aziz bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, to join them in high-level meetings with the visiting United Nations High Commissioner for Relief, Ruud Lubbers.¹⁵⁵ An advertisement for QCS’ relief activities in Kosovo speaks of a collaborative partnership with the state-supported Qatar Red Crescent Society.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, until recently, a WHOIS lookup of the Qatar Charitable Society’s website (www.qsociety.org) listed Hashem Hussein as both the Administrative and Billing Contact for the site. His corresponding e-mail address, “hashim@MMAA.GOV.QA,” indicates that Mr. Hussein was an employee of the Qatari Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture.

According to its website, the Qatar Charity Society innocently “aims to offer relief and help to orphans, victims of war and disasters by supporting them financially, socially and culturally up to the age of 18. QCS aids widows to meet living expenses particularly those who lost all relatives and friends.”¹⁵⁷ By 1995, QCS claimed to have initiated over 250 projects worldwide in 35 countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Bosnia, the Palestinian territories, Yemen, and the Philippines.¹⁵⁸ In one fiscal quarter of 1997 alone, QCS was reportedly engaged in worldwide projects estimated at a total value of over 3.5

¹⁵⁰ United States Of America v. Enaam M. Arnaout. Government’s Evidentiary Proffer Supporting The Admissibility Of Coconspirator Statements. United States District Court Northern District Of Illinois Eastern Division. January 6, 2003. Pg. 94.

¹⁵¹ “Voluntary and Charitable Organizations.” <http://www.dohaislamicsummit.org/qatar/english/islamic-e.htm>. March 1, 2003.

¹⁵² Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). July 1, 1998.

¹⁵³ Iktorowicz, Quintan, “The new global threat: transnational Salafis and Jihad.” *Middle East Policy*. No. 4; Vol. 8; Pg. 18; ISSN: 1061-1924, December 1, 2001.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.yellowpages.liwal.net/assistance/icc.htm>. March 1, 2003.

¹⁵⁵ “UNHCR briefing notes: Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Rwanda.” <http://www.reliefweb.int>. Dated October 11, 2002.

¹⁵⁶ “Urgent Relief for the Muslims of Kosovo.” http://www.qcharity.org/qenglish/images/kosovo/new_page_2.htm. March 1, 2003.

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.qcharity.org/qenglish/index.html>. March 1, 2003.

¹⁵⁸ “Qatar organization carry out welfare projects.” *Riyadh Daily*. January 13, 1995.

million Qatari Riyals.¹⁵⁹ QCS advertised 20 numbered bank accounts in the Qatar Islamic Bank and the Qatar International Islamic Bank ready to receive wired donations from at home and abroad.¹⁶⁰

However, as is the case with both MWL and BIF, QCS' charitable mission represented little more than an excuse to provide material support to terrorists. In trial proceedings surrounding the prosecution of individuals associated with the conspiracy to bomb the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, QCS was first named by as a major financial conduit for Al-Qaida. Former Al-Qaida member and star government witness Jamal Al-Fadl testified how he had worked closely with QCS in 1993.¹⁶¹ Al-Fadl was asked to discuss Dr. Abdullah Mohamed Yousef, a fundamentalist veterinarian and director of QCS. He explained:

"The guy [Yousef], he runs a group, he is one of our membership, one of the al Qaeda group membership, and also he is [Sudanese] Islamic National Front membership, and he was in Afghanistan. So he helped our people for the travel, documents, and also if some money come from the Gulf area to the organization, he gives the group some money from that money."¹⁶²

In the Sudan, QCS was actively aiding radical quasi-official militias associated with the National Islamic Front (NIF) in fighting Christian and animist groups in the south of the country. In a fundraising brochure for the Sudan distributed by QCS in Qatar, the Society appealed to its donors to help protect "our brotherly Sudan" from "wild savage invaders," who were accused of "destroying the Sudanese territorial integrity, security, stability, and unity." The brochure further noted, "Every tiny support is great and important especially in this holy month, Ramadan. It is the month of Allah[sic] blessings... and the month of 'Jihad' in one's person, one's wealth, and one's dwellings. Support for those brave heroes who are sacrificing their persons will be of great mercy, forgiveness and freeing from the Hell fire."¹⁶³ During one short period of 1999 alone, the chairman of the Qatar Charitable Society reported the transfer of 1 million Qatari Riyals in the form of "emergency aid" to the Sudan.¹⁶⁴

In 1995, Bin Laden reportedly confirmed to Jamal Al-Fadl that \$20,000 supplied by Dr. Abdullah Yousef through QCS was used by Al-Qaida to bankroll the attempted assassination plot that year against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in nearby Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At the time, Bin Laden sternly rebuked the financiers of the abortive terror plot for their carelessness in concealing the true source of the funds, and expressed serious concerns that "al Qaeda's abilities to use charities to fund operations might be compromised as a result."¹⁶⁵

During the mid-1990s, Dr. Yousef also used the resources of the Qatar Charitable Society to help underwrite the financial needs of the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM).¹⁶⁶ At the time, EIJM recruits, seeking to overthrow their own government and replace it with an Islamic

¹⁵⁹ "Projects carried out by Qatar Charitable Society." [Middle East News Items](#). Info-Prod Research (Middle East) Ltd. September 8, 1997.

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.qcharity.org/oenglish/banks.htm>. March 1, 2003.

¹⁶¹ [United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden, et al.](#). February 6, 2001. Testimony Transcript; Page 329.

¹⁶² [United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden, et al.](#). February 6, 2001. Testimony Transcript; Page 330.

¹⁶³ <http://www.qcharity.org/oenglish/helpsuda.htm>. Dated December 27, 1997.

¹⁶⁴ *Al-Riyah*. August 16, 1999.

¹⁶⁵ "Government's Evidentiary Proffer Supporting the Admissibility of Co-Conspirator Statements." [United States of America v. Enam M. Arfaat](#). United States District Court Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division. Case #: 02 CR 892. January 31, 2003. Page 103.

¹⁶⁶ [United States of America v. Usama Bin Laden, et al.](#). February 6, 2001. Testimony Transcript; Page 330.

regime, were receiving military training from senior Al-Qaida lieutenants in the Sudan after having been recruited to follow Usama Bin Laden's international agenda. Several years later, the Deputy Emir of EIJM, Abul Bara' Hassan Salman, confirmed in an interview, "As for the latest Christian onslaught which is being led by America... I say to the Muslim people everywhere: supporting Jihad and the Mujahideen is the way to remove the nightmare of degradation and humiliation which has rested on the chests of our community in its various forms."¹⁶⁷

Outside of Africa, the Qatar Charitable Society was also extremely active in the Balkans and the turbulent Muslim republics of the Caucasus. In November 1994, one Egyptian QCS "aid worker" was killed and another badly burned in a mysterious "gas explosion" in Sarajevo.¹⁶⁸ QCS also helped distribute a collection of fundamentalist articles titled "Obstacles to the Islamic Resurgence" edited by former Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.¹⁶⁹ In the wake of September 11, Izetbegovic stepped down amid controversy that his administration had provided safe haven and travel documents to hundreds of Muslim militants loyal to Al-Qaida.¹⁷⁰ More recently, a VIP social event was organized by QCS in Bosnia to inaugurate a new relief project ordered by a "Decree of His Excellency the Emir [of Qatar]."¹⁷¹ The party was attended by, among others, Ambassadors from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Iran.¹⁷²

In October 2001, the Azerbaijan Ministry of Justice forcibly closed down its own local QCS office for, "under the guise of charity," conducting "damaging activities that violate our national interests, as well as [cooperating] with terrorist structures and [distributing] propaganda inciting radical sectarianism, religious hatred and fanaticism."¹⁷³ In 1995, a QCS office founded in neighboring Dagestan (adjacent to Chechnya) dispensed over 3 million Qatari Riyals in less than two years.¹⁷⁴ Russian intelligence became suspicious when they discovered that the QCS branch was being run by an Egyptian citizen named Yasir Ibrahim. Dagestani state tax police initiated an inquiry into the organization, and uncovered forged documents and invoices detailing hundreds of thousands of dollars of illicit financial transactions. From the evidence they collected, investigators estimated that QCS had given perhaps as much as \$1 million to unspecified "Chechen extremists." Yet, the true numbers will likely never be known because, as the Russians discovered to their dismay, "most of the 'charitable contributions'... were not recorded anywhere. The same goes for how the money was distributed."¹⁷⁵

By liquidating charity bank accounts into untraceable cash withdrawals in war-torn states (often with no reliable banking systems), QCS was able to make this money simply disappear. Journalists confronted Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al-Thani with Russian

¹⁶⁷ "...The Governing Regime is a Terrorist Regime Which Acts With Enmity Against the Eritrean People: An Interview with the Deputy Amir of the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement – Abul Bara' Hassan Salman." *Nida'ul Islam*. Issue 22; February-March 1998.

¹⁶⁸ "Egyptian aid worker, injured in gas explosion, due for evacuation." *Agence France Presse*. November 26, 1994.

¹⁶⁹ http://www.ocharity.org/oenglish/book_1.jpg. March 1, 2003.

¹⁷⁰ "Former Bosnian president says mojahedin and terrorists not synonymous." *HINA News Agency*. Broadcast in English in Zagreb. October 9, 2001. 1334 GMT. *See also*: "Muslim leader denies there are Bin-Ladin's supporters in Bosnia." *SRNA News Agency*. Broadcast in Serbo-Croat language in Bijeljina. October 9, 2001. 718 GMT.

¹⁷¹ "Qatar Relief Organization Builds 112 Houses for the Bosnian Returnees." *Al-Riyah*. August 31, 2002.

¹⁷² "Azerbaijan closes offices of Arab relief organizations due to illegal activity." *Interfax News Agency*. April 10, 2002. *See also*: "Azerbaijan shuts down Kuwaiti, Qatar charity organizations." *Turk News Agency* (Baku). Broadcast in Russian language. April 9, 2002; 1530GMT.

¹⁷³ "Charity denies Russian charges of assisting Dagestan rebels." *Al-Riyah*. September 20, 1999.

¹⁷⁴ *Sergobya* (Moscow). November 16, 1999.

allegations that QCS was openly and actively supporting "certain Arab individuals... fighting with the Chechen fighters." With little reflection, Al-Thani flatly admitted that, indeed, this might be the case:

"[W]e as a government cannot control the aid going abroad, some of which may go for humanitarian goals, and some may start as humanitarian but end up in another way. However, there is no monitoring because people are sympathizing... We as a government may be able to control our sympathy, although in the end we are only human beings and Muslims... [t]herefore we cannot restrain the people's feelings in this regard."¹⁷³

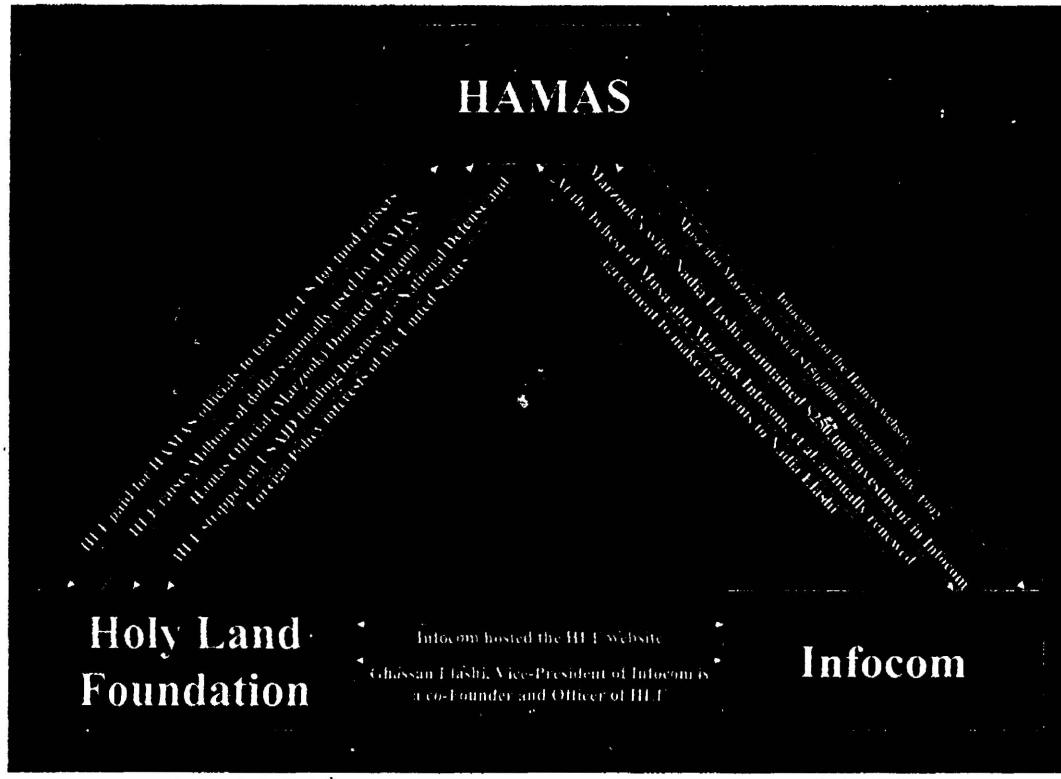
Even after the September 11 suicide hijackings, the Qatari regime continued to refuse to restrict the fundraising and religious activism of pro-Al-Qaida religious charities, including the Qatar Charitable Society.¹⁷⁴ In September 2001, the very month that Al-Qaida struck at America, QCS' official newsletter carried an article titled "Jihad is the Solution!" The author urged faithful Muslims:

"The only way to liberate Palestine is the holy Jihad which mobilizes all potentialities in the Arab and Islamic countries, and in which all Muslims stand as one behind the Mujahideen and support them in their Jihad... The time has come for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of Salahudeen and to restore Jerusalem and Palestine to the Arabs and the Muslims. For Jerusalem is in your hands, Oh, Muslims. There is no solution to the matter save Jihad. 'You shall readily mobilize, light or heavy, and strive with your money and your lives in the cause of GOD. This is better for you, if you only knew.' (Quran 9:41)"¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Bin Qinnah, Khadijah. "Minister denies Russian report on funding for Chechen militants." *Al-Jazeera* Television. Broadcast in Arabic language. November 22, 1999; 2040GMT.

¹⁷⁴ Trabelsi, Habib. "Noose tightens around Islamic charities in Gulf." *Agence France Presse*. October 3, 2001.

¹⁷⁵ Al-Imari, Dr. Abdelqader Muhammad. "Oh Muslims, Jerusalem is calling you! Jihad is the Solution!" *Qatar Charitable Society Magazine*. September 2001. <http://www.qcharity.org/maga/>.



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